THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) The Military Officers may deal with foreign missions for specific purposes after obtaining prior approval of competent authority.

(b) The Government of United States of America (USA) invites serving defence officers of India to visit the USA as part of their IMET programme (International Military Education and Training) and bilateral defence cooperation programme. Such visits are for the purposes of training and bilateral reciprocal visits.

(c) and (d) The Chief of Naval Staff had not raised any objections on such visits by defence personnel to the USA.

Army Cantonment in Hoshiyarpur

†1091. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had considered to set up an army cantonment in the district of Hoshiyarpur a few years ago;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a survey has also been conducted by Government to set up a cantonment area;

(c) if so, the amount incurred on getting the survey done;

(d) the time it will take for the implementation of this scheme; and

(e) the details of the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) There is no proposal for establishment of a cantonment under the Cantonments Act, 2006 at Hoshiyarpur District in Punjab.

(b) to (e) The question does not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

Shortage of Officers

1092. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI VINAY KATIYAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a shortage of officers in the Armed Forces of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, force-wise; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by Government to fill the vacant posts in the Armed Forces?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) There is a shortage of officer in the Armed Forces. The details are as follows:-

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

	Army	Navy	Air Force
Authorised strength	46615	8797	12128
Positioned strength	35377	7336	10563
Shortage	11238	1461	1565

Several steps have been undertaken by the three Services to fill up the vacant posts. All officers including those in Short Service Commission (SSC) are now eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel after 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively. Time scale promotion to the rank of Colonel and equivalent after 26 years of service has also been introduced. Government has also issued orders extending the tenure of SSC officers from 10 years to 14 years.

Besides, the Armed Forces have undertaken sustained image projection and publicity campaign to create awareness among the youth on the advantages of taking up a challenging and satisfying career. Candidate-friendly recruitment procedures to attract more number of candidates and a focused publicity drive in various institutions to attract potential candidates have been undertaken. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media, motivational lectures in schools, colleges are also some of the other measures in this direction.

The Government has also appointed 6th Central Pay Commission to go into the question of revision of pay and allowances etc. of all the Government servants including the Armed Forces. The three Services have presented a joint memorandum to the Pay Commission suggesting revision of pay and allowances and other conditions. The matter has also been discussed with the Pay Commission by the three Services Chiefs and officers in the Ministry of Defence.

Pending cases against army officials

†1093. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of cases are pending in courts against the officers and other ranks in the Army in various parts of the country;

(b) the number of such cases which come under the category of serious offences and action taken by the Army thereon; and

(c) whether Government are contemplating to amend the law or start any other scheme for early disposal of such cases?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) There are 41 court martial cases pending against army personnel which require a disposal by a forum higher than summary court martial.

However, the number of cases pending against army personnel in various courts is 25 only which includes 6 cases filed before special court of CBI.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.